East Asian countries in general and Japan in particular. They include inviting delegations from Japan under Asian Co-operation programme through JETRO, Participating in Data Shows/COMJAPAN being held in Tokyo since 1994-95, sending delegations from India to Japan arranging contacts with Indian software companies for representatives of Japanese companies visiting India, exploring the possibility of export to Japan through Contract Manufacturing, carring on market surveys for the South East Asian countries.

Tax on DEPB Credits

470. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that several State Governments are imposing tax on the import entitlements earned by the Indian Exporters under the DEPB (Duty Entitlement Pass Book) Scheme with the reult that the very objective of the DEPB Scheme are being defeated;

(b) if so, the basis on which the State Governments are imposting tax on DEPB credit which are only reimbursements of the customs duty on inputs; and

(c) the steps which Government propose to take to correct the situtation so that volume of export trade is not adversely affected?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Duty Entitlement Pass book entitles an exporter to claim duty free credit as a percentage of the FOB value of exports. The exporter can import the goods duty free upto the DEPB credit entitlement. The DEPB credit entitlement is freely transferable which can also be sold/ transferred. Some of the State Governments have levied sales tax when the DEPB is sold/ transferred by holding transfer of DEPB as the sale of 'goods'.

(c) The Central Government has requested the State Governments to consider the exemption of Sales tax on the sale/transfer of the DEPB credit entitlement.

Corruption Charges in Soyabean Meal Deal in STC

471. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Board Level Officers are facing corruption chages regarding export of Soyabean meal recelty;

(b) whether it is a fact that finance and audit division of STC have revealed that there has been losses of Rs. 15 crores in these trading operations;

(c) what action has Government taken against STC officials responsible for these fraudulent losses to the company;

(d) whether Government have referred to CBI the whole issue; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sr.

(b) The trading loss on export of extractions which include repeseed, soyabean meal, groundnut meal etc. on an export of 1.93 lakh MTs and domestic trade of 0.61 lakh MTs during the financial year 1997-98 is provisionally estimated to be Rs. 9.83 cores.

(c) No loss on account of fraudulent deed has been reported by STC.

(d) No. Sir.

(e) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Impact of Pressure from W.T.O. and I.M.F.

472. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the impact of pressure from W.T.O. and I.M.F. on Agriculture and Textiles sector;

(b) whether India propose to remove all its import restraints on textile products in phased manner;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps proposed in selection to W.T.O. obligations?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) There is no pressure from either the World Trade